

are the kind most in use. As there are but four or five at present in which to carry to and from the mines twenty to forty thousand passengers, at about ten shillings per head, besides the provisions, mining tools, &c., to supply this army of Cariboo—the price of freight being, at least, one pound per ton for one hundred and fifty miles—it is likely some twenty thousand pounds will be received by them during the present year. Allowance should be made for great numbers of the crowd passing through Oregon, by the “Dalles,” a route far from being equal to that *via* Victoria; but these swarms of travellers scatter so much money on their road, that newspapers, traders, and others, more or less interested, use every art to divert it into their own section. In connection with steamboats, the price of fuel is of great importance; coal, though so near the surface, and easily extracted, being worth about thirty shillings per ton, owing to high wages. The little mining town of Nanaimo, called the “Newcastle” of this coast, is on Vancouver’s Island, nearly opposite the mouth of Frazer River. The river steamboats mostly burn wood, which is cut into four-foot lengths, and stacked in cords at different points on the river-bank: it is sold at about sixteen shillings per cord. This quantity is a stack four feet high, four feet wide, and eight feet long.

Several exploring parties have attempted to find a route to the new “El dorado” from the coast, and Captain Cavendish Venables appears to have dis-

covered one from the south arm of the Bentinck, and a still better one leading from Bute Inlet has been made known.

An old California pioneer, a Scotchman, named Downie, has been untiring in his efforts to make discoveries, which the Governor, particularly desirous they should be made, has assisted. Under the Major’s (his California title) superintendence, a company attempted to prospect Queen Charlotte’s Island; but its rigorous climate led to nothing further than the confirmation of the existence of gold-bearing quartz, which would require expensive machinery to work advantageously. Mr. Downie also took a party through from the coast, returning by Frazer River; thus establishing its practicability. He is supposed to have made a valuable discovery during the past year, whilst on a cruise in a vessel built for him by an enterprising merchant named Burnaby.

Competition amongst packers will settle whether either of them is better than the established route of the Frazer; and the Government is contracting for a good road between the points where the present terminate and the Cariboo district.

Instead of as at present occupying about three weeks to reach this section from Victoria, in another year it may probably be reached, without fatigue, in seven or ten days.

The Government of British Columbia has now authorized a loan of £100,000 for twenty years, bear-